

# **Wildlife 2012**

## **The Arizona Game and Fish Department's Strategic Plan for the Years 2007–2012**



**Arizona Game and Fish Department  
2221 West Greenway Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4399**

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## Disclaimers

### **Recommended Citation**

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Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Office of the Deputy Director, DOHQ  
2221 West Greenway Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4399

and

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4040 North Fairfax Drive, Room 300  
Arlington, Virginia 22203

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## Preface

*Wildlife 2012* is the Arizona Game and Fish Department's strategic plan for 2007–2012. It is an important communication tool for sharing Department goals and perspectives with the public, partnering agencies, organizations and employees. This plan describes the Department's guiding principles, defines the Department's diverse roles and functions and identifies the management direction that the Arizona Game and Fish Commission has provided to the Department for the next six years.

Public involvement in the development of *Wildlife 2012* is important. Everyone has a stake in the continued health and diversity of wildlife populations and a role to play in ensuring wildlife for tomorrow. At the same time, in this plan the Department desires to convey both the short- and long-term nature of its mission to the public, including the conflicts inherent in managing resources for a public that is diverse in its needs and desires.

### **What is This Plan?**

This plan is built around four “strategic themes,” which are wildlife, people, business management and staff. Under each theme, one or more topics are discussed. For each topic, this plan identifies strategic issues affecting that topic, and goals, objectives and strategies to address the strategic issues. The strategic themes are central to this plan. They will become the driving force behind the Department's operational plans and implementation plans. Discussion of strategic themes begins on page 9.

### **How Is This Plan Related to Other Department Plans?**

Prior strategic plans focused on just one of the programmatic areas for which the Department is responsible; for example, *Wildlife 2006* was solely a strategic plan for wildlife. In contrast, *Wildlife 2012* provides strategic guidance for all programs within the Department. It emphasizes wildlife management, which is the Department's primary focus. However, in order to present the Department's overall strategic direction, *Wildlife 2012* also addresses off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation beyond their impacts to wildlife resources, as well as the administration of the Department.

Previous strategic plans were detailed down to the level of day-to-day Department operations. In contrast, *Wildlife 2012* takes a broader, more truly strategic perspective. We developed the plan this way to make it more accessible to the public, believing that people are more likely to get involved in the planning process if the plan itself is more user-friendly. Details will not be lost, but will instead be described in operational and implementation plans. The Department develops operational plans that step down from the strategic plan to the biennial budget cycle, and implementation plans that step down from operational plans for more immediate priorities.

### Strategic Plan



### Operational Plans



### Implementation Plans

Provides a high-level and approach-oriented perspective, but does not identify operational detail. This plan provides a broad overview of the Department's varied responsibilities. Public participation is invited.



Provides the detail that used to be given in strategic plans and is linked to the strategic plan. These plans are more specific and take less time to implement than the strategic plan (two years rather than six). Examples include: Hunt Guidelines, Sportfish Management, Law Enforcement, Shooting Ranges, Wildlife Area Plans, etc. Other plans (such as the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and species recovery plans) provide input into operational plans. Public participation is invited.



Provide guidance to all work units on the activities to be implemented by that work unit. These plans include estimates of resources (people and financial) required to implement the activities. They are developed internally.

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# Organizing Principles

## Introduction

To understand the environment within which *Wildlife 2012* will be implemented, it is important to understand the Department's statutory authority, mission and vision, as well as the principles that guide the Department's work. This section also includes a brief profile of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the organization charged with carrying out *Wildlife 2012*.

## Statutory Authorities

The Department has statutory authorities related to wildlife, watercraft and off-highway vehicles.

*Wildlife:* Arizona Revised Statutes Title 17 directs the responsibility for maintenance and management of the state's wildlife resources to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department.

*A.R.S. 17-102:* Most wildlife in Arizona is the property of the state.

*A.R.S. 17-231:* With due consideration for Department recommendations, the Commission shall:

- Establish policies and programs for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife.
- Establish hunting, trapping and fishing rules and prescribe the manner and methods that may be used in taking wildlife.

Through the Commission, the Department may:

- Enforce laws for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- Develop and distribute information about wildlife and activities of the Department.

*Watercraft:* Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5-311 directs the responsibility for watercraft recreation, safety and enforcement to the Commission. Through the Commission, the Department may:

- Make rules and regulations required to carry out in the most effective manner all the provisions of this chapter.
- Administer the law enforcement and boating safety program on the state level, and accept federal grants for the purpose of boating safety and related enforcement.

*Off-highway Vehicles:* Arizona Revised Statutes Title 28-1176 establishes the Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Fund, which is apportioned between the Department and Arizona State Parks Department. With its portion of the fund, the Department shall:

- Provide an informational and educational program on off-highway vehicle recreation and law enforcement activities relating to state off-highway vehicle laws and enforcement to protect wildlife habitat (A.R.S. Title 17 Article 4).

## Mission

To conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation and use by present and future generations.

## **Vision**

The Department's vision is to be "Recognized and respected as *the* leader in progressive management and professional stewardship of wildlife for tomorrow."

## **Principles**

We are an organization dedicated to excellence. The culture of the Arizona Game and Fish Department is one of stewardship, scientific integrity, continuous improvement, teamwork and partnerships. This culture is supported by our core values, which guide our behaviors and decisions:

- Trust
- Reliability
- Empowerment
- Accountability
- Respect
- Civility

The Department also recognizes and promotes the following principles:

- We are responsive to our customers: We strive to provide courteous and efficient service to the public and each other.
- We are one Department: We are integrated and work together as a team with a common mission, mutual respect and professionalism.
- We rely on sound information and adaptive management to make decisions: We apply the best methods available to develop biological, social and economic data to achieve our mission.
- We build successful and productive partnerships: We understand that wildlife conservation and recreation; and watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation are but a few of the activities of an intensively used landscape, and we will strive to recognize their rightful place in the multiple use ethic that drives public lands management.
- We keep the public informed and involved, striving for management that is open to appropriate public review and scrutiny. We engage in dialogue and seek public input to develop and to encourage participation in programs and services.
- We foster strong, effective leaders: We develop leaders who are committed to excellence in all aspects of their work.
- We value employees: We foster a safe and creative work environment where all employees have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

# Department Profile

## **Arizona Game and Fish Commission**

The Department carries out its mandates under the direction of the five-member Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Each member is appointed by the Governor with Senate approval. The Department's Director is appointed by and reports to the Commission. During Commission meetings, public comment is taken.

## **Arizona Game and Fish Department**

The Department has a long tradition of conserving wildlife, providing recreational opportunities for the hunting and angling public, supporting other types of wildlife-based recreation, and meeting its statutory obligations related to off-highway vehicles and watercraft. The Department maintains and enhances programs for conservation of wildlife resources; for hunters, anglers, wildlife watchers, photographers and other recreational users of wildlife; and for all those who take pleasure in enjoying that wildlife exists.

The Department is part of the executive branch of Arizona state government. State law mandates that the Department protect Arizona's wildlife resources, regulate watercraft use and enforce OHV laws. We do this by implementing rules and policies; taking actions to conserve, preserve, manage and enjoy wildlife; enforcing laws that protect wildlife, public health and safety; and developing cooperative partnerships (throughout this strategic plan, "partners" and "partnerships" refer to private individuals, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and all political subdivisions and agencies within and adjacent to Arizona's borders with which the Department collaborates).

Wildlife and habitat cross many boundaries and political subdivisions. To influence regional management of wildlife, the Department is an active member of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Management, and works in cooperation with other states and nations. Department staff are involved with national programs such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, to shape management decisions outside Arizona's political boundaries that can impact Arizona's wildlife resources and habitat.

## **General Responsibilities**

Through the Commission, the Department is responsible for:

- Managing wildlife as a public trust resource for everyone.
- Developing partnerships and advising partners and the public on laws, rules and policies that affect wildlife, off-highway vehicle recreation and watercraft recreation.
- Working with partners to improve and preserve wildlife habitat and minimize impacts to wildlife resources.
- Enforcing laws and providing education to encourage OHV use that minimizes impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitats, in compliance with statutory obligations.
- Enforcing laws and educating boaters about safe and responsible watercraft recreation.
- Recruiting and retaining hunters, anglers and participants in the shooting sports.
- Informing and educating the public about their wildlife resources, wildlife-associated recreation and off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation.
- Collecting — and making management decisions based on — species and population data.

- Collecting, interpreting and using data on public participation, values and opinions.
- Developing and providing access for wildlife-associated and watercraft recreation.
- Managing wildlife populations, including enhancing, stocking and restoring populations.
- Helping the public minimize conflicts with wildlife.
- Selling hunting and fishing licenses and registering watercraft.
- Managing wildlife areas, fish hatcheries and other facilities.
- Managing and enhancing shooting ranges in support of shooting sports.
- Administering grant programs whereby government agencies and non-governmental organizations can compete for funds to finance eligible projects, when supported by rule.

### **Department Organizational Structure**

The Department has four divisions that, along with the Director's Office, work to accomplish the Department's mission.

**Field Operations Division (FOD)** is comprised of six regional offices, the Law Enforcement Branch and aviation support. The regional offices are in Pinetop, Flagstaff, Kingman, Yuma, Tucson and Mesa. The division implements program objectives that pertain to wildlife resource and habitat management, watercraft and OHV activities, including outreach and education.

**Wildlife Management Division (WMD)** is comprised of the Fisheries, Game, Habitat, Nongame and Research branches. This division supplies program direction and provides assistance for the Department's wildlife programs. When developing wildlife management programs, the division considers the management history of the state's wildlife resources, the current and future needs of the resources and public, the effects of a rapidly expanding and outdoor-using human population on wildlife and wildlife habitat, and the necessity of sound scientific techniques to facilitate obtaining the data needed to manage the variety of wildlife found in Arizona.

**Information and Education Division (IED)** has two branches. The Information Branch is responsible for public communication, license sales and media relations. The Education Branch is responsible for the Department's public and environmental education, including the coordination of classes in hunting, fishing, shooting sports and boating safety. Education Branch also coordinates the Department's hunter recruitment and retention efforts. The division operates and assists shooting ranges statewide, and produces environmental education curriculum and resources to educate people about wildlife, wildlife habitats and wildlife management.

**Special Services Division (SSD)** is comprised of four branches: Development, Finance and Accounting, Information Systems and Support Services. The Development Branch is primarily responsible for water development, habitat improvement and maintenance, boating access and improved recreational access to state, federal and private lands. The Finance and Accounting Branch provides financial and cost statements and oversees watercraft registration, license dealers and big-game draws. The Information Systems Branch provides data-processing capabilities, including systems analysis and design. It also supports the Department's computers, phone systems and network connections. The Support Services Branch procures goods and services, maintains the Department's vehicles, disposes of surplus property, and provides warehousing, mail and courier services.

# Key Areas of Emphasis

## **Introduction**

The Department's activities fall under four key areas of emphasis. The first three correspond to the Department's statutory authorities to manage wildlife, watercraft and off-highway vehicles. The fourth, business administration, is derived from the Department's authority to operate as a unit of state government.

## **Key Area of Emphasis: Wildlife Program**

The Department manages wildlife using the North American Model, which asserts that wildlife is held in public trust — not owned by any one person or entity, regardless of whether the animal is on public or private land or water. Wildlife is managed based on the overall public good. The North American Model allows non-frivolous use of wildlife, and relies on scientific research-based management. It recognizes that wildlife cannot be managed along political boundaries, so cooperation across political boundaries is a necessity. The North American Model also relies on laws and enforcement, and provides the public a voice in wildlife management decisions.

The goals of our wildlife management program are: to conserve and preserve wildlife populations and habitats; to provide compatible public uses, while avoiding adverse impacts to habitat and wildlife populations; and to promote public health and safety; and to increase public awareness and understanding of wildlife resources. "Wildlife" means all wild mammals, wild birds and their nest or eggs, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans and fish, including their eggs or spawn.

Wildlife management is funded through fees charged to hunters, anglers, trappers and other wildlife users for licenses, permits, stamps and tags; a federal excise tax on some types of hunting and fishing equipment; the Arizona Heritage Fund (funded through the Arizona State Lottery); Wildlife Conservation Funds (from Tribal gaming revenue); a federal program for State Wildlife Grants; voluntary contributions to Arizona's Wildlife Checkoff on Arizona state income tax forms and other sources.

The wildlife management program is divided into three subprograms: game management, nongame management and sportfish management. The success of these subprograms relies on other key project areas, including environmental/habitat evaluation, research activities, law enforcement, habitat development/modification, information and education, among others.

### **Game Management Subprogram**

The purpose of the Game Management subprogram is to protect, restore and manage game populations and their habitats to maintain the natural diversity of Arizona, and to provide equal wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities for all present and future generations. This includes big game, small game, fur-bearing animals, predatory animals, upland game birds and migratory game birds.

### **Nongame Management Subprogram**

The purpose of the Nongame Management subprogram is to protect, restore, preserve and maintain nongame and endangered wildlife as part of the natural diversity of Arizona and to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy nongame and endangered wildlife without

detriment to those resources. “Nongame wildlife” is all wildlife except game mammals, game birds, furbearing animals, predatory animals and game fish. “Endangered wildlife,” are those species listed by the Department as Tier 1a of *Species of Greatest Conservation Need* or by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered, threatened or a candidate for such status.

### **Sportfish Management Subprogram**

The purpose of the Sportfish Management subprogram is to protect and manage sportfish populations and their habitats, while also working to preserve the natural diversity of Arizona. Sportfish management also provides fishing opportunities for present and future generations. “Sportfish” means fish that are pursued by anglers, including cold-water fish (such as trout) and warm-water fish (such as largemouth bass). The Department’s water quality staff help ensure the quality of our fishing waters.

### **Key Area of Emphasis: Off-highway Vehicle Program**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the primary OHV law enforcement, education and training agency for the state. Its purpose is to manage OHVs in a manner that protects Arizona’s wildlife and wildlife resources, to educate people about responsible and ethical OHV use opportunities, to manage OHV recreation and to encourage safe, responsible and ethical OHV use in relationship to the Department’s statutory responsibility. To accomplish these, the Department concentrates on public information and education, law enforcement and habitat damage assessment. The Department relies on the OHV Recreation Fund, administered jointly between the Department and Arizona State Parks, to accomplish these diverse OHV efforts statewide.

### **Key Area of Emphasis: Watercraft Program**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the primary agency coordinating watercraft law enforcement and boating safety for Arizona. The program’s purpose is to educate the boating public about safe use, facilitate watercraft recreation and promote safe and responsible watercraft recreation. To accomplish these, the Department enforces watercraft laws, maintains aids to navigation, registers watercraft and provides information materials and education opportunities to the public. The Department relies primarily on watercraft registration fees and U.S. Coast Guard grant funding for these activities.

### **Key Area of Emphasis: Business Administration Program**

The Business Administration Program supports the financial, physical, and information systems infrastructure that allows the Department to accomplish its many goals. This program includes specific processes, strategies and objectives for the systematic management of the Department’s financial and physical assets (facilities, information systems, infrastructure support, etc.), human resources and outreach and marketing efforts. Business administration supports the entire Department, and as such is funded through all the Department’s funding sources.

## The Planning Environment

The current natural and societal environments in Arizona form the context within which this strategic plan was developed, and these conditions and trends will continue to shape and direct the Department's management actions over the life of this plan.

### Wildlife

Arizona has a rich biological diversity, ranking in the top five states in the nation for the number of native bird, reptile and mammal species, and in the top ten for overall diversity of vertebrates. Many animals have been present for a long time, while others have appeared only in recent years. Some newly arrived species were established intentionally, as is the case with rainbow trout, while others have arrived as unwelcome or invasive species, and yet others appeared as they expanded their range. Some are forever gone, extinct. Others, like the Mexican gray wolf, were once extirpated but are being re-established through aggressive reintroduction programs. Some are unlikely to ever return due to loss of suitable habitat.

The numbers below reflect the total number of species that potentially can be found in Arizona, including transient, casual and rare species that occur unpredictably. Non-native species that are not established and do not regularly breed in the state, such as Barbary sheep and feral hogs, are not included. With the exception of mollusks and crustaceans, invertebrates are also excluded. The Department sometimes manages these wildlife resources at the sub-species levels.

<b><u>Numbers of Wildlife Species Found in Arizona</u></b>	
<b><u>Taxonomic Group</u></b>	<b><u>Total # of Species (Not Including Subspecies)</u></b>
Amphibians	29
Birds	534
Fish	69
Mammals	140
Mollusks & Crustaceans	83
Reptiles	<u>112</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>967</b>

More information on Arizona's wildlife resources can be found on the Department's Web site, [azgfd.gov](http://azgfd.gov), and in the Department's "Arizona Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) 2005–2015." The CWCS provides a vision for managing Arizona's wildlife and natural habitats. Its primary focus is identifying and managing the "wildlife and biotic communities of greatest conservation need." The CWCS offers input into both the operational and implementation tiers of the Department's planning process.

### Habitat

The State of Arizona contains approximately 73 million acres. The state is diverse both topographically and geologically. Elevations range from about 75 feet above sea level (near Yuma) to 12,643 feet (San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff). Precipitation ranges from less than 3 inches to over 30 inches per year depending on elevation and location. Environments range from the hot, dry deserts of southern Arizona, through grasslands and woodlands in mid-elevations, to cold, moist montane and alpine forests in the higher elevations.

The Commission and Department have management authority for the wildlife of the state, but share the management responsibility for habitat with many partners. A multitude of state, federal, tribal and local agencies and private landowners manage Arizona's land areas. Arizona also shares a border with California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado, and an international border with Mexico. Wildlife populations obviously do not recognize these political boundaries. The Department therefore partners with these entities on wildlife, land and water management projects on lands they administer.

### **Trends Affecting Wildlife**

Although Arizona supports a tremendous diversity of wildlife, it faces a variety of challenges and opportunities for wildlife conservation.

Arizona's growing human population presents significant challenges to wildlife management. For the past two decades, population growth in Arizona has been among the highest in the nation, increasing 40 percent from 3.6 to 5.1 million between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). While the desert urban centers of Phoenix and Tucson continue to expand, development is also increasing rapidly in what are now rural areas.

This growth presents a number of challenges to the Department's mission, including:

- Habitat loss due to development
- Habitat fragmentation and degradation from networks of roads and utility lines
- Diminished or prohibited access to public and private lands
- Water quality issues
- Increased demand for already limited water resources and diminished availability of water
- Introduction of non-native plants and animals
- Increased and diversified recreational demands
- Increased wildlife-human conflicts

The demographics of Arizona are changing. Attitudes and perceptions about wildlife management and wildlife, OHV and watercraft recreation are changing, too. Monitoring changes in public opinion allows the Department to predict, plan for and better serve constituents.

Periodic drought is a normal component of Arizona's climate. Arizona has experienced drier than normal conditions for the past several years, and some climatologists expect this condition to continue for the next several years (the life of this strategic plan). Dry conditions affect wildlife, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities through various means. Climate changes and weather conditions present unique challenges for wildlife management planning because predicting their occurrences is uncertain. However, the likely effects of these events have been incorporated into management and policy plans.

# Strategic Themes

## Introduction

In this plan we identify four broad “strategic themes” that help organize and manage the challenges of accomplishing the Department’s mission. Within each theme are one or more specific topics for which the Department has identified strategic issues, goals, objectives and strategies. The four themes, and the specific topics within each theme, are:

1. Wildlife (resource management; wildlife recreation)
2. People (public awareness, support and involvement; OHV, watercraft and shooting sports recreation; customer diversity; partnerships)
3. Business Management (financial services; physical assets)
4. Staff (human resources)

## Strategic Theme: Wildlife

### (Topics: Resource Management, Wildlife Recreation)

#### 1. Strategic Issues Affecting Resource Management

Arizona’s varied habitats support a great diversity of wildlife. However, direct loss, fragmentation and continued threats to the health and diversity of these habitats through development associated with population growth, introduction and expansion of invasive species, increased demands from the public, wildland fires, habitat damage caused by illegal immigration, homeland security efforts and long-term drought create challenges for the Department’s wildlife management efforts.

#### Resource Management Goal

Conserve, preserve, enhance and restore wildlife populations and their habitats.

#### Resource Management Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Conserve, preserve, enhance and restore Arizona’s wildlife habitat and resources while balancing resource needs with recreational and multiple use.
2. Maintain or improve the quality and connectivity of habitats to support a diversity of wildlife species.
3. Minimize the negative impacts of invasive species on wildlife and their habitats.
4. Improve the status of wildlife listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
5. Provide sustainable use of wildlife by people.

#### Resource Management Strategies

- Assess the status of wildlife populations, habitats and resources to help prioritize wildlife management programs and activities.
- Establish guidelines for the management of wildlife populations and their habitats that balance the uses of lands and waters of Arizona with the values of the public to ensure sustainability of wildlife populations.
- Use available tools and resources and develop new ones to conserve and preserve wildlife habitats and populations.
- Collect and analyze scientific information for use in decision making.

- Coordinate with partners to manage wildlife populations and their habitats.
- Manage wildlife with consideration of social and economic factors.

## **2. Strategic Issues Affecting Wildlife Recreation**

Arizona's human population has been increasing at a far greater rate than the national average. This growth is likely to continue throughout the life of this strategic plan. A growing human population places increasing demands on wildlife populations, in part because of shrinking wildlife habitat due to human development. Increasing human population and decreasing wildlife habitat also result in loss of areas in which to recreate, concentrate human activity in existing recreation areas, increase human-wildlife conflicts, increase density of watercraft and off-highway vehicles, and may reduce the quality of habitat available for wildlife as a result of these competing uses.

Arizona's increasing human population is more urban and less rural. Perceptions among residents regarding traditional uses of wildlife differ. Although Arizona's population is increasing, the number of licenses sold has remained relatively stable over the past few years. In order to ensure the future viability of these activities, it is essential to recruit new and retain existing hunters, and anglers. In addition, assessing the desires of Arizona's diverse human population is essential to implementing appropriate management direction.

The increasing use of recreational vehicles like watercraft and off-highway vehicles can result in conflicts with wildlife and habitat protection, and requires protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat while still permitting managed recreational use. Increased emphasis must be placed on human safety, not only in recreational situations, but also in human-wildlife conflicts in both rural and urban areas. Educational efforts must address all Arizonans and target diverse user groups to provide the necessary information to ensure compliance, reduce conflicts among users and with wildlife, and encourage sustainable enjoyment of Arizona's diverse wildlife resources.

The demand for access to public and State Trust lands for recreation has increased. About 18 percent of Arizona is privately owned and these lands can provide recreational opportunities and access into public and State Trust lands. However, as more Arizona landowners exercise their right to deny access to or through their private lands, access to public and State Trust lands has become difficult. Many times, collaboration with private landowners results in improved wildlife habitat in exchange for short-term or perpetual access agreements. These efforts must continue to address the underlying reasons for denial of public access, such as vandalism, trespassing, littering, off-road activities, disruption of landowner operations, liability, undocumented immigrants and drug trafficking.

### **Wildlife Recreation Goals**

Increase the opportunity for the public to enjoy Arizona's wildlife resources, while maintaining and improving wildlife resources. In addition, address the underlying reasons for denial of public access across private lands by providing technical and financial assistance to private landowners and educating the public about ethical use and habitat protection.

### **Wildlife Recreation Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Encourage continued compliance with regulations governing wildlife-related recreational activities.
2. Promote public safety during wildlife related recreation activities.
3. Increase opportunities for use and enjoyment of wildlife.
4. Increase participation in wildlife-oriented recreational activities.
5. Provide access to public and other lands that are blocked by private lands.

### **Wildlife Recreation Strategies**

- Identify, assess, develop and promote recreational uses of wildlife in Arizona.
- Implement efforts to increase hunter and angler recruitment and retention.
- Identify, assess and develop watchable-wildlife recreational opportunities.
- Enhance and promote watchable-wildlife recreation.
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with private landowners and land management agencies to increase recreation opportunities.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for wildlife habitat improvements in exchange for short-term or perpetual access agreements.
- Inform and educate the public on factors influencing recreational opportunity and public access across private lands.
- Inform and educate the public on responsible recreational use, including impacts on wildlife resources, courtesy toward other recreationists and respect for private property rights.
- Minimize obstacles that prevent people from participating in wildlife-oriented recreational activities.

## **Strategic Theme: People**

### **(Topics: Public Awareness, Support and Involvement; OHV, Watercraft and Shooting Sports Recreation; Customer Diversity; Partnerships)**

#### **1. Strategic Issues Affecting Public Awareness, Support and Involvement**

An informed and educated public can better participate in decisions that affect wildlife and choices related to safe, responsible and ethical uses of watercraft and OHV. Public and partner involvement in Department policy- and decision-making can be enhanced by providing accurate information to the public and partners in a variety of formats. The Department will maintain robust efforts to provide all segments of the public with opportunities to participate in programs, services and decision-making processes.

The Department will continue to pursue ways to integrate wildlife information, environmental education, and safe, responsible and ethical use of watercraft and OHV messages into public education. Partnerships with civic groups, the private sector and educational institutions will help the Department reach new constituent groups, and the use of new communications technology will improve customer access to this information.

#### **Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Goal**

Maintain an informed and supportive public that recognizes its ownership and stewardship responsibilities for wildlife resources and helps to disseminate and act upon watercraft safety and responsible OHV use messages.

## **Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Increase the percentage of the public that identifies the Department as the state agency responsible for wildlife management in Arizona.
2. Promote the widespread use of environmental education curriculum in public, private, charter and home schools.
3. Improve media and e-newsletter communication.
4. Increase participation in hunter education, aquatic education, boating safety education and shooting sports programs.
5. Increase public awareness of the need for safe, responsible and ethical watercraft and OHV use.
6. Increase the use of volunteers.
7. Increase public awareness and support of the North American Model of wildlife management. The North American Model asserts that wildlife is held in public trust — not owned by any one person or entity, regardless of whether the animal is on public or private land or water. Professionals manage wildlife based on the overall public good.
8. Improve educational materials for schools.

## **Public Awareness, Support and Involvement Strategies**

- Create a broader range of venues for public participation in Department management direction.
- Publicize and actively market environmental education curriculum through the Web and other media.
- Expand informational, educational and interpretive outreach opportunities to culturally, economically and ethnically diverse constituencies.
- Increase the recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers, shooting sports participants and volunteers.
- Identify, assess, develop and promote watchable wildlife recreational opportunities.
- Provide educators materials that help meet Arizona educational standards.

## **2. Strategic Issues Affecting OHV, Watercraft and Shooting Sports Recreation**

Increasing use of recreational vehicles like watercraft and off-highway vehicles often results in conflicts among user groups and requires balance between recreational management and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Compliance with regulations becomes a greater challenge as recreational participants increase and often compete for limited space and resources. Increased emphasis must be placed on habitat protection and human safety in recreational situations. Educational efforts must address all Arizonans and target diverse user groups to provide the necessary information to ensure compliance and reduce conflicts among users and with wildlife.

## **OHV, Watercraft and Shooting Sports Recreation Goal**

Increase the opportunity for the public to enjoy shooting sports. Encourage participation in education and information programs supporting safe and responsible use of off-highway vehicles and watercraft, while maintaining or improving wildlife resources and habitats.

## **OHV, Watercraft and Shooting Sports Recreation Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Encourage continued compliance with regulations governing watercraft, OHV and recreational shooting sports activities.
2. Reinforce public safety during watercraft, OHV and recreational shooting sports activities.
3. Increase management of OHVs and efforts to minimize impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat.
4. Improve the watercraft recreational experience.
5. Minimize impacts to aquatic resources from increased watercraft use.
6. Increase participation in boating safety education and shooting sports programs.
7. Continue to work with interested user groups and agencies to protect existing funding and acquire new funding sources dedicated to safe and responsible OHV use.

### **OHV, Watercraft and Shooting Sports Recreation Strategies**

- Develop and maintain statewide shooting ranges.
- Inform and educate the public on factors influencing recreational opportunity and public access across private lands.
- Inform and educate the public on responsible recreational use, including impacts on wildlife resources, courtesy toward other recreationists and respect for private property rights.
- Construct new and enhance existing boating-related facilities (ramps), while minimizing impacts to wildlife resources.
- Expand public awareness and acceptance of the shooting sports as a leadership and recreation opportunity for young people.
- Use a wide variety of techniques to communicate more effectively with OHV and watercraft groups to promote safe, responsible and ethical use.
- Provide additional Hunter Education training options.
- Expand operating under the influence (OUI) watercraft enforcement efforts.
- Recruit and retain shooting sports participants.

### **3. Strategic Issues Affecting Customer Diversity**

Providing opportunities for people to learn outdoor skills and participate in wildlife recreation and sporting activities helps build new and supportive relationships. These relationships will be critical to the future of the Department. Creating opportunities to reach out to culturally, economically and ethnically diverse audiences is important to increasing participation in wildlife activities. The Department must seek to discover the interests and address the needs of a changing Arizona population.

#### **Customer Diversity Goal**

Increase customer diversity to better reflect the demographics of Arizona.

#### **Customer Diversity Objective**

Within the next six years:

1. Increase the diversity of Department customers (culture, ethnicity, sex, age, income and ability).

### **Customer Diversity Strategies**

- Identify the wildlife, watercraft and OHV-related education or service needs and desires of the public.
- Identify underrepresented groups and develop programs to increase their participation in or understanding of the Department's services and wildlife management mission.
- Establish and maintain partnerships with a broad range of organizations.
- Increase the number of classes, communication or other services provided to underrepresented or minority communities.

### **4. Strategic Issues Affecting Partnerships**

Private landowners, other state agencies, the federal government and tribal nations are the primary land managers in Arizona. The Department manages less than 0.5 percent of Arizona's land base. Thus, partnerships with land managers are crucial to ensuring protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats. The Department also partners with private individuals, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and political subdivisions to work cooperatively to conserve, preserve, maintain or enhance Arizona's wildlife habitat and resources.

### **Partnerships Goal**

Maintain and develop effective partnerships that enable the Department and its partners to reach mutual goals.

### **Partnerships Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Enhance the Department's ability to manage wildlife resources.
2. Reinforce responsible and safe OHV and watercraft recreation that minimizes impacts on wildlife resources and habitats.
3. Provide recreational shooting opportunities through partnerships.

### **Partnerships Strategies**

- Identify common wildlife interests and goals of current and potential partners.
- Effectively communicate the Department's goals to partners.
- Develop new and maintain effective partnerships
- Establish partnerships to promote research and management actions needed to support wildlife resources and stable wildlife, and responsible watercraft and OHV recreation and shooting sports recreation.

## **Strategic Theme: Business Management**

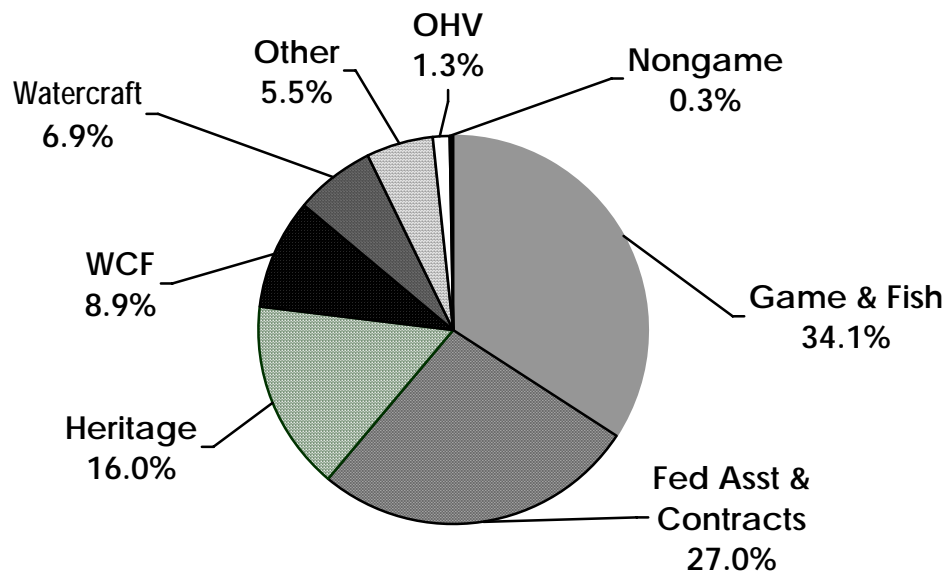
### **(Topics: Financial Services, Physical Assets)**

### **1. Strategic Issues Affecting Financial Services**

The Department does not rely on general funds for the vast majority of its operations, although the State Legislature still appropriates certain Department funds. The Department receives funding from sales of hunting, fishing and trapping licenses, stamps and tags. Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration funds are derived from a federal excise tax on some types of hunting, shooting, fishing and watercraft products. Other federal funds such as State Wildlife Grants and contracts also provide substantial funding for Department activities. Funds are also provided

through the Arizona State Lottery (Heritage Fund), Tribal gaming (Wildlife Conservation Fund), watercraft registrations, voluntary contributions to Arizona's Wildlife Checkoff on Arizona state income tax forms and other private donations, non-federal contracts, and a gas tax that funds some of the Department's OHV management efforts. However, the cost of administering the agency and funding its activities continually increases. The cost of postage, vehicle fuels, and employee-related benefits (such as health insurance and retirement contributions) is expected to increase over the life of this plan. Therefore, a leading objective of the Department is continued growth of its revenue base to meet public expectations for services.

**AGFD 2006 Revenue by Percent**



### **Financial Services Goal**

Attain and maintain the Department's financial stability commensurate with needs.

### **Financial Services Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Enhance the Department's annual financial base
2. Ensure that budget/planning management information is prepared and systematically monitored to ensure compliance with federal and state statutes and regulations.
3. Maintain appropriate flexibility in managing financial resources.
4. Develop and implement a cost accounting system that meets Department management needs.
5. Increase public and partner understanding of the Department's budget process.

## **Financial Services Strategies**

- Update and maintain financial and planning management systems to ensure funds are available to sustain planned activities and provide the agility to address unexpected opportunities or new priorities.
- Develop and monitor short-term (less than two years out) and long-term (four years out) spending plans aligned with the Department's strategic plan.
- Administer and revise as necessary the Department's fiscal/budget policies, procedures and business processes.
- Use the three-tiered planning processes to enhance management of the Department.
- Provide management with timely, consistent, uniform and accurate financial reports to assist in effective management decisions.
- Find significant new funding mechanisms.
- Inform the public and partners about the Department's budget development and the budget approval process.

## **2. Strategic Issues Affecting Physical Assets**

As of 2006, the Department maintained more than 270 facilities within its building and infrastructure system across the state, totaling over 542,000 square feet. Facilities range in age and type from historic structures constructed in the 1930s to newly built residences and operational facilities at the Department's fish hatcheries. Estimated replacement costs exceed \$61 million.

It is critical that the Department develops and executes a comprehensive cyclic maintenance program that includes scheduled replacement or renovation of major building systems and other infrastructure components, preserving the overall value of these assets, circumventing costly repairs and maintaining the useful life of facilities.

The Department values excellence in customer service, and strives to provide customers with ever-increasing quality in both products and services. This includes ensuring continuous service to critical customers and outreach efforts to better promote current programs, while developing new products and services to meet changing customer preferences.

## **Physical Assets Goal**

Attain a well-developed technical and administrative support structure that provides quality, responsive service to internal and external customers.

## **Physical Assets Objectives**

Within the next six years:

1. Ensure cost-effective and timely maintenance of the Department's facilities.
2. Complete construction of new headquarters.
3. Sustain and improve internal and external business functions.
4. Improve efficiency and delivery of customer services.

## **Physical Assets Strategies**

- Optimize the use of iPlan, the state's Web-based strategic planning tool, to capture and manage a detailed account of facility and building conditions to support short- and long-term capital improvement planning and scheduled maintenance and renewal projects.

- Implement capital investment opportunities to increase energy efficiency, improve accessibility and enhance health and safety.
- Conduct efficiency reviews and best practices evaluation of internal and external programs and implement strategies that will confer efficiency and value.
- Invest in technology (such as motor pool and information systems) to upgrade the infrastructure to provide support to internal and external customer services.

## Strategic Theme: Staff

### (Topic: Human Resources)

#### 1. Strategic Issues Affecting Human Resources

Arizona's population has been increasing at a rate above the national average. This growth has resulted in continued urbanization and significant changes in the overall demographics of the state. The Department's mission and values demand a professional and well-trained work force that reflects the diversity of Arizona. Although the Department has traditionally had a low turnover rate, many of the Department's leaders are expected to retire in the next several years. Turnover at all levels of the Department's work force is also increasing.

#### Human Resources Goal

Achieve a diverse, satisfied and highly effective work force that is recognized for its integrity and professional expertise.

#### Human Resources Objectives

Within the next six years:

1. Increase diversity of the workforce.
2. Develop and maintain a satisfied and highly motivated work force.
3. Ensure leadership continuity.
4. Maintain a competent and well-trained work force.

#### Human Resources Strategies

- Revise and implement the Department's diversity plan with emphasis on developing mentoring programs and partnerships with schools to increase awareness of natural resources career opportunities to underrepresented groups.
- Continue to provide diversity awareness training to new employees and develop supervisory training that fosters understanding of and commitment to the value of a diverse work force.
- Address pay issues, by seeking market-based compensation for all employees.
- Provide training that incorporates core competencies to ensure leadership continuity.
- Increase the use of volunteers.
- Develop and implement a systematic approach to leadership skills and attitude development, including an employee-mentoring program.
- Recognize employees for their contributions throughout the year.
- Improve recruitment strategies.

## Comment Instructions and Form

**Comment on this Wildlife Strategic Plan may be submitted on this form to the Arizona Game and Fish Department at any time, via mail, fax, or e-mail to:**

*Wildlife 2012*, c/o Funds & Planning  
Arizona Game and Fish Department  
2221 West Greenway Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4399

Phone: (602) 789-3500  
Fax: (602) 789-3926  
E-mail: Wildlife2012Plan@azgfd.gov

**Comment may also be submitted in a separate document**

Comment:

\_\_\_ Please keep my name on the Department's Strategic Plan mailing list.

\_\_\_ Please remove my name from the Department's Strategic Planning mailing list.

Name:

Title:

Agency/Organization:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip: